

Grant Oratorical Contest, November 19, 1963

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James Lee Wilde, Mary Anne Quin, Steven B. Davis

ADDRESSES GIVEN TO THE BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY STUDENT BODY
JAMES WILDE, MARY ANNE QUINN, AND STEVEN B. DAVIS
with introductions by Dr. J. LaVar Bateman and Dr. Morris M. Clinger
presentation of award by George I. Cannon

DR. J. LAVAR BATEMAN

In the early 1920's Dr. T. Earl Pardoe prevailed upon President Heber J. Grant to sponsor a contest on our campus to foster good speaking among Latter-day Saint young people. For many years President Grant, or now his very fine family, some of whom you will meet a little later on in the program, each year have faithfully come from Salt Lake to help us commemorate this event.

This year, about three weeks ago we started with almost forty very fine speakers. A week ago we could not decide which of six would come. Any of the six could have represented you today, but we have selected three very fine young people, and we hope that you will enjoy their messages. It should be faith promoting, and we know it will give you something to think about.

We would like to hear the three speakers in order, and I will introduce them all at once. Then, while the judges are selecting one speaker to receive an award, we will have a fine musical number, which I will introduce. Then you will get to meet our guests.

Our three speakers in this order are Brother James Lee Wilde, a Junior in political science from Provo, Utah. Our second speaker is Mary Anne Quinn, a sophomore political science major from Cos Cob, Connecticut. Our third speaker is Brother Steven B. Davis, a junior in political science from Modesto, California.

A LIVING CHRIST

JAMES LEE WILDE

A short time ago a mission president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was asked the question, "Why don't Mormons put the cross on their churches?" The mission president replied, "As Mormons we believe in a living, not a dead Christ."

The most vital message of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is that Jesus Christ does live and that he speaks to us today. One important manifestation of a living Christ's power is his ability to generate a spiritual rebirth in the lives of his children.

Maria Zickbauer is a middle-aged woman who lives in the artistic city of Darmstadt, Germany. For many years Sister Zickbauer had honestly endeavored to find the truth, the true Church of Jesus Christ. And yet as she investigated her church and other churches, she was not completely satisfied.

In the midst of this trying period in her life, two young Americans, missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, came to her door. After she allowed the two men to come in, she recognized a sweet spirit of peace in the room which she had never felt there before.

It was a peaceful spirit which seemed to calm her troubled heart and soothe her frayed nerves. Later this same spirit prompted Maria Zickbauer to accept baptism into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

After perceiving the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Maria Zickbauer dedicated her complete life to following its precepts.

The story of Maria Zickbauer is not simply the story of a lady who found a new church, or who began following new theoretical precepts. Her story is one of a woman who honestly endeavored to find the truth, who gave herself completely to that truth after she found it, and who, after laying her sacrifice on the altar of faith, found the peace which comes from knowing that Jesus Christ does live.

Unlike the rich young man who came to Christ and was willing to dedicate everything he had to the Master, except giving of his goods to the poor, Maria Zickbauer was ready to give everything she had. Because of her willingness to sacrifice for His gospel, this woman has been transformed into a dynamic witness who testifies that Jesus Christ lives.

The problem, however, of Maria Zickbauer had not been one of dedicating herself to Christ—her problem was in finding Him. Our problem, however, since we are surrounded by Christ's gospel, is not so much in finding Christ as it is in finding the dedication and the knowledge which we need to gain and retain a testimony.

It seems just a short while ago that a new missionary was called into the office of his mission president for his initial interview. After a few minutes had elapsed, the mission president asked, "Elder, do you know that Jesus Christ lives?"

The question hit the elder like a medicine ball. True, he had been raised in the Church, had gone to seminary, and thought himself active. He knew something about the theoretical principles of Mormonism, but he really had not applied them in his daily life. All that he could say to his mission president was, "I-I-I'm sorry. I-I-I'm sorry, but I just don't know."

This elder had to learn that the divinity of Jesus Christ is not proved by ecumenical councils, rigid dogmas, or the erring philosophies of men. This elder learned, however, that the gospel of Jesus Christ can be perceived by the power of the Holy Ghost. This was what Paul was saying when he wrote to the Corinthians, "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." ([1 Cor. 2:11.](#))

This elder learned that the things of the Spirit of God are perceived by that Spirit, first, by seeking to find the truth; second, by doing everything in our power to find the truth; third, by calling upon the Lord to assist after we have exhausted all of our resources; and, fourth, by dedicating ourselves completely to following His commandments.

The wonderful thing about these principles is that they help us not only to attain a testimony that Christ lives, but they also help us to retain the testimony after we have received it.

Because Jesus Christ lives, because his spirit is real, and because these principles do come from God, this same young elder stands before you today bearing testimony to the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Brothers and sisters, it is a frightening responsibility to stand before so many people, and I keenly feel the responsibility I have to only say the entire truth. If I may, I would like to say to you at this time the purest truth I know-the truth that Jesus Christ does live. I know this from the bottom of my heart.

But simply because we attain a testimony does not mean we have attained salvation. Our testimony must be put into action. It is possible to pay lip service to the belief in a living Christ, while in reality we are worshiping something else. Particularly can this be true when we are surrounded by an environment like we have here at B.Y.U. Here such things as L.D.S. dress standards, the Word of Wisdom, outward manifestations of honor and Church attendance are simply a part of our campus life. This, of course, is as it should be. But when we simply go along with these principles, going through the mechanical motions because we want to convey the "Mormon image" externally and keep only those commandments which are convenient, brothers and sisters, are we really worshiping a living Christ?

Are we like the Hebrews of the Old Testament who needed in front of them a lesser law written on stone tablets? Or are we able to become the "Children of the New Covenant," with a higher law written in our hearts?

Are we compelled by external pressures to outwardly conform to the teachings of Christ? Or are we inwardly motivated by the Holy Ghost to feel the effects of a spiritual rebirth? Brothers and sisters, what kind of a Christ do we worship?

About two thousand years ago two women embarked on a sorrowful journey to prepare a body for burial. When they arrived at the grave, they received the immortal message: "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen." ([Luke 24:5-6.](#))

In 1820 a young boy, Joseph Smith, went into a grove of trees to pray, having faith that his prayer would be answered and ready to dedicate himself to the gospel of Jesus Christ. He came from those woods with a testimony that Jesus Christ does live.

Today, brothers and sisters, the modern world needs active, strong and dedicated members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who are inwardly converted to a living Christ-dynamic people who by their actions reaffirm the words of Peter when he said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." ([Matt. 16:16.](#))

PERSONAL HONESTY

MARY ANNE QUINN

Have you cast your vote for the moral decay of our country? Oh, come now. Surely you have taken a towel from a motel, because they wouldn't miss just one. Or perhaps you cheated on that last college examination. Or didn't you collect a little bit more than you should have on that last insurance claim, because everyone knows that insurance companies have lots of money.

We live in the time of big business and big government-in the time when many Americans no longer apply their standards of honesty and integrity to these large organizations, in the time when we must be concerned about this problem and what we as individuals can do to help correct it. As members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints we know the importance of honesty. Mark E. Petersen has told us that "Honesty is a fundamental part of the Church of Jesus Christ, and that honesty must be applied to every phase of our lives."

What is our tradition of honesty? On Mount Sinai Moses received the moral code which has governed all the great civilizations of the past. This included, among others, "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not covet," "Thou shalt not bear false witness." We in our country at least pay lip service to the belief that these standards of honesty should be applied to relationships between individuals in our society. But it is questionable whether these same standards of honesty are considered applicable when applied to the relationship of the individual with his government, his employer, or perhaps even his university.

A recent Look magazine article carried several illustrations of this lack of honesty in our country as a whole. The story was told of a pious church attender who bragged about returning five dollars to someone who had given him too much change. However, the same individual felt that it was unnecessary to correct the mistake when a telephone operator returned his money after he had made a long distance telephone call. He offered as an excuse, "Well, the telephone company won't miss my money."

Another example of this lack of honesty is found on some of our nation's college campuses. A questionnaire filled out at many of our large universities and colleges revealed that 60 per cent of our nation's college students cheat on examinations and that a major portion of these students do not regard it as wrong to do so.

An investigation in a large American business corporation revealed many breaches of honesty on the part of the employees. Not only did some employees take home company pens, pencils, and paper, but it was also found that some were stealing whole sets of silverware from the cafeteria by taking home one piece a day.

The new Americana Hotel in New York City has revealed that replacing articles stolen by its guests has significantly cut into its profits for the first few months of operation. Among the things stolen were 38,000 silver spoons, 18,000 towels, 1,500 silver finger bowls, and, paradoxically enough, 100 Bibles.

These last two instances which I have cited can be called nothing but common thievery, for the name is not changed simply because the victims of the theft are large business corporations. And yet apparently a significant portion of the American public does not think that such acts are as wrong as they might be if the articles were stolen from somebody's home.

These examples which I have cited come from our nation as a whole, but can we on this campus afford to be complacent? Or do we perhaps daily perform dishonest acts toward our University simply because it had not occurred to us that such acts might be wrong? Are we like the young secretary working in one of our University departments who sends letters to her missionary through the University mails, thus not having to pay postage? She is a good L.D.S. girl. She would not dream of stealing money from the Church or the University. And yet, without thinking, that is exactly what she is doing.

Or are we perhaps like the young man who worked in one of the cafeterias prior to going on his mission who felt that it was his right to take as much food as he wanted while he worked there because the wages were so low, until he stopped to think that taking this food was the same as taking money from the cash register.

Many of us on this campus have jobs, and yet do we give a full day's work for a full day's pay? If we do not, we are doing the unthinkable thing of cheating the University.

Can we as a school or as a nation afford to let the belief be prevalent that these thefts do not really matter? Think for a moment. We know through the Book of Mormon that our nation will only be free so long as its people continue in righteousness. Can we say that we are a righteous nation if we permit such dishonesties; even though they may occur unwittingly? Just as a little power can breed tyranny, so little dishonesties can breed moral decay. If they are permitted, they can insidiously breed until they affect our honesty with ourselves, our relationships with others, and, eventually, our reputation as a nation. I think we can see that it is to our advantage to stop these small acts of dishonesty in dealing with large institutions; and yet can we return to the moral enforcement of the past?

When America was governed by the Puritans, there were rules that governed every phase of honesty and integrity. Breaches of this honesty were punished by the pillory and stock. As long as business and government were small, such externally enforced honesty was possible. But today, with our population numbered in tens of millions and with companies employing tens of thousands, such externally enforced honesty is no longer practical or possible. Today honesty must come internally, from each individual's conviction of right.

With the help of the Holy Ghost, we have this conviction of right, and if we will but examine our own actions, there is much that we can do to change the attitude of our nation toward honesty. Let us be aware of our responsibilities toward the University and toward the townspeople of Provo. When we travel away from the campus, let us be honest in every phase of our lives, thus providing a good example for those who may come in contact with us. If we do this prayerfully, we can help to build an America in which honesty once again is the ideal. So ask yourself the question: "Have I cast my vote for a morally strong America?"

CHALLENGE FOR KNOWLEDGE

STEVEN B. DAVIS

Several weeks ago there appeared in a magazine of national circulation an article entitled "Memo from a Mormon: A Young Man Questions His Church's Policy Toward Negroes." In this article, the young man, a B.Y.U. student two years ago, questioned whether or not the

policy of the Latter-day Saint Church toward Negroes was consistent with the Church's professed desire of achieving equality and brotherhood.

It is difficult, and perhaps impossible, to know what motivated Jeff Nye to write this article. It does seem apparent that the editors of the magazine for which this article was written were interested primarily in selling as many copies of the magazine as possible; an honest essay was never their goal.

But was the article itself completely unfair? Is it possible that the work was an honestly intended one, in which a genuine question was asked? Many apparently believed that this might be the case, for the article generally was treated with tolerance. Yet within this community a type of criticism arose, the nature of which seems particularly disturbing, for the majority of these rejoinders devoted themselves not to a discussion of the religious question set forth by the young man, but instead were devoted to questioning the very existence of the article itself. It was branded "yellow Journalism" by some, yet few explained why this might be so. And one prominent member of the studentbody dismissed it as a failure of the young man to have learned his lessons as a boy of thirteen, apparently overlooking the fact that this question is a source of serious consideration to many of our Church leaders, let alone a young adolescent.

As members of this studentbody, it should be a source of considerable pride that the majority of individuals who discussed this work did so on a rational, logical, intellectually honest level. But it should also come as disappointing and dangerous that there were those who were content to dismiss this challenge by tactics that begged the question.

It is dangerous because it is indicative of a trend which exists in our society today that threatens to influence our religious values. There is at present a pressure or coercion to conform, to accept, to live according to the mores and standards of society without ever questioning the basis or truthfulness of those standards. We are asked to live in a society we have not made and never question the wisdom of the makers. Thus, in too many cases, today's youth matures only physically. Emotionally our youth is forced from adolescence into maturity and given a standard philosophy without ever really experiencing the despair and the joy that comes from questioning what life is really all about. There can be but one result: the premium placed on conformity produces a generation of young people who know all the answers but never know why they are the answers.

This tendency of our society to force an acceptance of its ways is dangerous to us as L.D.S. youth, in that its influence may permeate and corrupt our religious values, causing us to become smug and complacent in our beliefs and intolerant of those who question and wonder. These are serious charges to be made of us, and our automatic response is to deny them. Yet can we say we are entirely tolerant when we dismiss a young boy's challenge on the basis that he never bothered to learn his lessons? Can I say that I am entirely honest if I always accept and never question what I am told by our leaders? If we make no efforts on our own to increase our knowledge and understanding, can we say that we are living the spirit of the gospel?

There are those who maintain that since we possess the great truths, no challenges need be made, no questions need be asked. We answer those people by replying that true knowledge cannot spring from mere acceptance. We answer by replying that a cessation of a search for greater understanding leads to stagnation and a decay of even that little which had been

possessed.

It is not enough, then, to merely dream of our "mansions on high"; our spiritual progress is dependent upon an ever increasing knowledge. So if an individual questions and wonders, if it is done in humility and honesty, can we justifiably brand that person as being weak and destructive?

Brigham Young, as a prospective member of the restored Church of Jesus Christ, could not be satisfied with reading the Book of Mormon only once or twice. Instead, this individual, who was to become known as the "Lion of the Lord," read the Book of Mormon nine times before he was convinced of its truthfulness. Joseph Smith was asked to conform with the prevailing religious customs of his day and become a member of one of the popular Protestant sects. How fortunate it is for us that he questioned their truthfulness.

Brothers and sisters, our leaders have never become smug and complacent in their beliefs. They have constantly spurned the easy, most expedient path and sought instead the joys that come from questioning and striving. Most of us will never achieve the positions of leadership of these men, yet the joys they have experienced can never be denied us if we will but follow their example in searching for an increasing knowledge of the everlasting truths.

President Hugh B. Brown tells us of the individual who cannot be satisfied with a cessation of questions and challenges. "His is the philosophy," he tells us, "that if you choose to go from one mountain peak to another, you must also travel the valleys in between and prepare for the darkness and marshes and other entanglements. The light of the gospel is that beacon which will see you safely through."

The man for whom this University was named once made a similar statement. When asked what a person's goal in life should be, Brigham Young replied, "There is a Mount Sinai for every child of God if he only knows how to climb it."

May people never say, "The Mormons are a smug, intolerant people. Instead, may it always be said of us that we are an open-minded, questioning, challenging kind. And may we find that our questions lead us to the peak of our own personal Mount Sinais and to the greatest of joys, a perfect knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

DR. J. LAVAR BATEMAN

You have just listened to James Wilde, who spoke on "A Living Christ"; Mary Anne Quinn, on "Personal Honesty"; and Steven Davis, on "A Challenge for Knowledge." Have you picked out which one you would like to receive the honor? While our judges' are mulling over this, the rest of us can relax and hear a very fine string quartet. Then Dr. Morris M. Clinger, chairman of the Department of Speech, will introduce the members of the Grant family who are our guests. Following that he will introduce the guest who will present the award to our winning speaker.

DR. MORRIS M. CLINGER

It is my personal pleasure now to have you meet some of these guests. Time surely will not allow them to speak to you, but as I name them I would appreciate it if they would stand, that

you might come to see them better and to know them.

In order, then, as they are sitting on my left, are two daughters of the late President Grant. First is Sister Rachel Grant Taylor, then Sister Lucy Grant Cannon. By her side is a son and a daughter-the son, Brother George Cannon, and the daughter, Sister Rachel Henninger. We are very happy, too, that accompanying the Grant family is another one whom many of you will know, the wife of Brother George Cannon, Sister Isobel Hales Cannon. Isobel, will you stand please. Isobel, a graduate of Brigham Young University, is the daughter of our own Wayne B. Hales, by whom she is sitting. Two great-granddaughters of President Grant are members of our studentbody here at BYU.-Miss Linda Tanner and Miss Elizabeth Dutson.

It is a real pleasure, I repeat, to have these people here to make it possible that we can continue what I think to be an excellent speech activity, and also that they continually see fit to come and represent their fine family in this activity.

I now know who the winner is. I suppose you think you know. I am going to leave it to the prerogative and pleasure of Brother George Cannon to make the presentation to the winner and to announce his name.

GEORGE I. CANNON

It is good to be back on campus. I must say that it has changed a great deal since Dr. LaVar Bateman and I started as freshmen back in 1937. It is a real privilege for those of us who are members of the Heber J Grant family to be here at the Brigham Young University and participate in this Heber J. Grant Oratorical Contest.

As members of the family, we would like to thank President Wilkinson and the Speech Department and those who have participated in this activity for carrying on what we feel is a very fine tradition.

President Grant took a great deal of interest in this contest, and whenever possible he would attend in person to hear the talks presented by the young people and then to make the award. At about the time the contest was commenced, the Church began publishing the Triple Combination, which consisted of the Book of Mormon, the D&C, and the Pearl of Great Price. President Grant decided that that was the gift he would like to award to the winner. That tradition has continued, and this award has been made each year since to the winner of this contest.

After President Grant became too ill to participate in the contest, his daughters would come down to make the presentation, and they now feel that this should be passed on to the second generation. That is the reason that I am here with you today and occupying this position.

President Grant had a great deal of love and interest in the young people of the Church, and I am sure he would be very proud of these three fine people who have represented you this day and the fine way they have represented themselves and also the Church.

President Grant was a great exemplar of integrity and hard work, self-effort and persistence, and I am sure he would be pleased with the self-effort which has been manifest to us this day in

this oratorical contest.

It is now my pleasure to ask Brother Steven Davis, if he would, to come up to the stand. I am sure that all of us recognize every one of them as winners. But on behalf of the Heber J. Grant family, and of the Brigham Young University and its Speech Department, I want to congratulate you, Steve, for being selected as the winner of the Heber J. Grant Oratorical Contest Congratulations.

When President Grant gave a copy of this book to any member of his family, he would always write in his own words his personal testimony concerning these three Standard Works. I would like to take a moment to read two short paragraphs of his testimony which we are including in the book which Steve will receive:

More than any other book, I have loved the D&C. The words of our Heavenly Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, contained therein have been an inspiration to me from childhood.

As a boy of about fifteen I read carefully and prayerfully the Book of Mormon, and there came into my heart an abiding and firm testimony of its divinity. From that day to this, its wonderful teachings have been a comfort, a blessing, and a guide to me.

We hope, Steve, that you will experience some of the same benefits which President Grant did as you take this combination and read it and study it and put these principles into your life. We hope that you will continue to speak for the truth and for the Church as effectively as you have today throughout all your life. Again we congratulate you on joining the distinguished group of winners of this award.
